Le Seuil

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Le Seuil

by Cleophas (Targaryen_StormBorn)

Summary

Will was used to sleepless nights, pounding headaches, and mountains of work that he could hardly make a dent in. The feeling of constantly being watched? That was new and very much not appreciated.

Notes

If this premise sounds similar to something you have read before, it's because I originally posted something like it a year ago. The vibe wasn't working for me.

See the end of the work for more notes

The beginning

Will was being watched; he knew this on a primitive level, an early warning system leftover from his ancestors who relied on it to survive the night.

His pack sensed his unease and responded as such. Alert at every rustle of the leaves, clinging to the trees despite the cold fall air that had settled in weeks ago. They didn't stray very far off when he took them out to the bathroom while they flat out refused to venture out into the woods surrounding his cabin.

This lingering feeling of uneasiness followed him at work. The only time he felt alone anymore was in his cramped windowless office. Will spent most of his time not teaching and trying to get a few moments of rest as his nightmares grew worse over the last few weeks.

His coworkers used to Will's oddness- even asked if he needed anything. Alana was especially worried. Intelligent and beautiful, the half-fae that had taken him under her wings in an almost maternal-like way much to Will's irritation.

"You've been twitchy lately." Alana comments over their once-weekly platonic coffee date.

Will looks at the space just below her eyes, focusing on her voice and not the constant hum from the people around him. They usually chose this place because it didn't draw much of a crowd but they served some kind of special brew that drew people in.

However, Will still felt the unknown eyes boring into the back of his neck, sending tingles down the back of his neck.

"I'm always twitchy," he mumbles, evading the question and staring at his mug of milky coffee like it held the answers he needed.

"Yes Will." She sighs "It's even more noticeable recently, just yesterday the copier dinged and you jumped a foot into the air!" She reaches over to touch his hand "I'm worried Will, you smell like whiskey more often than not, you have definitely lost weight and you always look as if you are about to knock out at any moment." Alana was not the type to yell but her voice left no room to wiggle away from and his empathy prevented him from hiding from the brunt of her worry.

Will felt guilt as he heard the honest concern in her voice. She had been a good friend since he had started teaching, even if he originally wanted something more romantic in the beginning.

"I'm just a bit stressed, you know? The Gaven case with the children and then this new killer popping up. I just feel a bit off.`` He tries to assure her but fails Miserably.

"A bit?" She repeats with an inelegant snort.

In part it was the truth, he was used to sleepless nights and drowning himself in cheap whiskey. It's just lately it came with paranoia and the constant pressure from Jack to close the 'Ripper' case combined with disturbing feelings that came with working on a case.

The Ripper had appeared three months ago, body parts and organs quite literally ripped from the people they once belonged to, all within days of each other, all in remote parts of the surrounding states. When different FBI districts were working together you knew it was serious. The way the Ripper displays the bodies once the chosen part is taken was disturbing to even the most hardened agents.

This is why Will took very few cases, Alana helping to fend off Jack. He always got too involved it… changed him.

This case was one of the worst and he wondered if everything that has been haunting him stems from the moment he had picked up the case.

"I've tried to talk to Jack for you." Will watches her full lips pulled into a frown. "He won't budge."

Of course, he hadn't Jack, was just as obsessed as Will, if not more. He stays silent fiddling with his half-empty mug, he knew he was slipping, it's part of the reason he kept his appointments with Alana; provided a sense of normalcy that he hadn't had since he left college.

"Will, maybe you should put your foot down and take a break. You're long overdue for one and if you have to, threaten him with HR, even Jack won't put up a fight with them." Alana reaches over and clasps a slender hand around his own, he doesn't jump but it's a near thing.

Will thinks for a moment as the crowd trickles out knowing that there was no rush to reply.

He did need a break, he hadn't gone fishing or taken the dogs out on a hike in a while, and it would be good to do before the frost set in. He entertains the idea of going to his Dad's old house in Oklahoma, the weather would be warmer and he had enough vacation time set aside that it wouldn't be an issue. Will imagines getting away for a bit may help soothe his permanently frazzled nerves.

The more he thought about it the more appealing it became.

"Refill?" Will is startled out of his thoughts by the deep voice of their waiter.

Alana shakes her head and Will gives him the go-ahead without a glance. He knew his time with her was drawing to a close but he would stay a few more hours.

Will assures her that he'll talk to Jack about a vacation within the coming weeks and that seemed to have pleased her. She gives him a peck on his cheek and promises to see him soon.

feels a bit of tension release itself as he finds himself alone in the corner booth. As much as he cared for her he was still trying to spend time with her, it just wasn't as bad as it was with most people.

Will pulls out his notebook, an old battered thing he had picked up years ago. It helped if he could write his thoughts out when working on a case, it gave him the privacy of his true thoughts and kept him from being biased when he filled out his actual reports.

Will spent the next hour writing out his admiration of the bodies that filled his dream. Blood flecks delicate white roses as they inhabit the cavity of a young man's chest. Blue Sapphires and Diamonds replacing the eyes of one victim.

This told the story of passion, transformation, love, and perseverance.

There were also bodies adorn with the yellow fur of lions, others dyed red with the victims' own blood.

Passion, lust, royalty.

This was spelled out plainly for Will to see, the ripper was courting in the old fashion way. Showing his ability to provide food and warmth, the ripper showed his wealth by casually using expensive items that would only find their way into an evidence locker.

The Ripper was a traditionalist and definitely came from old money.

Will wonders what kind of person attracted such a monster? Someone no doubt just as noble as the Ripper, one who wouldn't bat an eye at the horrors committed by him. Perhaps another murderer?

This was why he couldn't show anyone his notebook, he would be locked up right alongside the monsters he helped find, and Will knew he deserved to be.

"Refill?" A male voice speaks directly beside Will causing the man to jump in his seat automatically closing his notebook.

Will makes a split-second glance into the man's bottle-green eyes before landing on the pointed ears betraying the man's elf origins.

"Excuse me?" Will asks.

"I was just asking if you needed a refill of your coffee, I'm sorry for startling you." The waiter's voice was pleasant and Will detected no amusement in it.

"Uh, yeah sure." Will's cup was half empty and no doubt stone cold. He could feel a slight throb behind his left eye from intently writing for the last half hour.

His cup was quickly filled and Will assumed that would be the end of the interaction until the elf slid into the chair across from him. Will instantly stiffens eyes darting down to glance at the name etched into the bronze pin on the uniform.

'Austin' was the man's name.

“You’re here a lot.” Austin comments and Will frowns wondering if this could be the mysterious being peeking through the shadows of Will’s dreams. But he instantly discards the idea, the aura of the man was nothing like the dark ribbon-like energy.

“Yeah,” he replies flatly.

“With that pretty brunette? You guys are really cute together” his voice held a false cheer to it that Will instantly sussed out.

“We.. we’re not together,” Will says a slight flush rising to his cheeks. Will watched as a smile stretched across the elf’s face. “I had hoped you would say that.” the man admits.

Oh.

This wasn't the first time someone had tried to get to Alana through him.

“I was wondering if I could give you my number?” a small line of paper was slid towards Will.

“She’s married,” Will states bluntly.

It was a recent development. Margo and she had eloped in secret, less than a month ago but the feelings between them were real and intense.

“Uh, I meant for you.” Austin let out an awkward laugh.

Will looks up to the man’s forehead in surprise, the man looked a bit younger and would be described as boyishly attractive with long red hair pulled into a bun near the nape of his neck. Not the type that he would think would be interested in a zombie-like, unkempt, man like himself.

“I-I mean you don't have to take it!” Will watches the blush crawl up the pale skin of the elf's face, causing faint freckles to stand out. “ I've just seen you a few times and I may have overheard you talking a few times. Not that I was eavesdropping! Er anyway-” the blush grew deeper and Will listened to the man’s rambling still in slight shock.

“I’m in school for forensic science, and well the way you speak about your cases is amazing. I just feel like I want to get to know you better.”

That was strange most were disturbed but then again Will hadn't gotten into the zone around the waiter.

The last date Will had gone on was when he was still in college almost ten years ago. Melissa was a nice girl and didn't mind that Will would be legless or armless once a month because of his donations. She was interested in him but Will found that he wasn't interested in her. Since then he rarely paid attention to anyone in that way.

Maybe that was his problem.

Alana would certainly say so, the apathy Will held towards life around him, disconnected purposely from those around him. While rarely appearing Will did feel the need to engage in the happenings of the world of the living, it's just he was so out of practice it didn't seem worth the effort.

Yet, nothing changes if nothing changes, maybe it was time for him to claw his way out of the metaphorical grave he had dug himself in. Perhaps the paranoia and dreams would fade with the light.

"Ah, I'm sorry I'll just-" Austin apologizes and makes the move to get up, his long fingers clasping his number to his broad chest.

"No!" Will interjects having realized he had been staring blankly at the note for quite some time Will forced himself to make contact with the elf's eyes which had gone dim from the perceived rejection

"I mean I wouldn't mind having coffee or something."

"Really?" Austin's voice was tinged with hope "That would be great!"

Will just nods and manages a small smile still not making eye contact as he takes the slightly crumpled paper.

"I have to get back to work but please text me whenever you want to hang out!" Austin says as he bounces away, voice cheerful.

Will spends the next ten minutes drinking the rest of his coffee eyes darting between the note and his own torn journal. The difference between the two was stark and Will wonders if he had made a mistake.

Once he finishes he tucks the note into the journal and leaves a tip on the table. It was late and he needed to head out and feed his pack before they found his last pair of good shoes and chewed them in revenge for a late dinner.

Will kept his head down feeling too awkward to see if Austin was watching him leave, because of this he ran straight into a strong chest bouncing away and dropping his journal as he exited the cafe.

"Sorry," Will mumbles without glancing up, dropping into a squat to pick up his stuff.

"No need to apologize, I should have been watching where I was going." The voice that spoke to him held an odd accent that Will notes absentmindedly sounds European.

Will doesn't respond, just walks out the door having had enough interaction for the day. He makes it a few steps outside into the drizzling rain noticing that the sun was already setting when the same accented voice calls out.

"Wait, William, you left something." Will turns slightly as a tall figure approaches him, arms outstretched large hands clasped around the paper holding Austin's number. Will

debates on taking it for a moment before accepting it with a quick thanks and continuing on his way.

If only Will hadn't been in such a rush he would have wondered how the stranger knew his name. Would have noted the resistance the man had when giving over the card.

If only he had looked up into the face of the man he would have noticed the seething red-tinted eyes and the way the cafe's light dimmed slightly as the man's shadow flickered and twitched as if it had a mind of its own.

If he had taken a second to observe, he may have had a chance.

Two Roads Diverged

Chapter Summary

Will struggles (doesn't he always?)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Three days later he still hadn’t contacted Austin, however, Will had noticed his house had been broken into. The timeline was unsure as he only noticed once he ventured up to stairs, listening as they moaned and groaned from disuse. The profiler disliked going past the ground floor but the October air began to frost the grass of his land and Will stored most of his winter things in an unused bedroom.

It was far from empty but Will could see that at least seven of his boxes were missing, thanks to his memory he knew it was mostly his winter clothes along with his pack’s (Buster refused to pee in the snow unless he had his booties), a few blankets and some extra fishing supplies.

Calling the police would be pointless he thinks leaning against the doorframe. The actual thrift could have happens at any time and Will didn’t like the idea of the cops invading his space and making his pack anxious. Plus it would definitely get to Jack that Will was afraid that he was being watched and Will would be forced back into therapy.

Will turns from the room knowing the only thing he could do was to take stock of whatever else may be missing and reenforce his windows and doors. He wondered if it was normal to see this as a minor, although, irritating issue.

He spent a good half hour looking and the only other things that were missing were some old case files that he worked on when he was younger. The thought of that information being spread had him reconsidering calling the police but Will didn’t want the lecture of keeping sensitive information in an old shoebox, in the sink of the half bath.

Will was sure that there were no clues to who might have done this until he begins walking down the hall to the stairs mind thinking of a few fingers of whiskeys to calm his semi-frazzled nerves. He sees an unusual pattern on the wood floor from the corner of his eye.

Most of the floor was covered in a carpet of thick dust. Yet, there were a set of prints filled in with a thinner layer of dust near the wall across from the staircase.

Will walks closer and his heart misses a beat, instead of boot prints or some other human-like print, there was a hoof print almost as large as his head.

‘What the fuck.’ He thinks stumbling back, according to the dust, the hoof prints couldn’t be any older than a few months.

His paranoia tries to double up after that but he tries to combat it with saner theories.

It could have been an overgrown Sayter, they were known to play tricks on humans when bored, a herd could have passed some time ago without his knowledge. It would explain the feeling of having been watched. Will had just fixated on the feeling and that’s why it never went away.

To make himself feel safer he went to Home Depot and bought iron bars for his windows and doors. Most creatures had an allergy and this would deter any more mischief, while also adding another layer of safety for his mind. Will was also glad that he lived so far away from any neighbors, he didn't want to be seen as racist.

By the first snowfall almost a week later Will was feeling a bit more optimistic about his future. Jack fought with him but eventually was worn down when Will made a vague threat to get HR involved if Jack refused his vacation request. After all, Will had more than enough hours saved up from his nine-year career and the only thing Jack feared was the paperwork that came from an HR investigation.

At work he was surprised that some of his students were starting to stray outside of the box when it came to their assignment, it made for fewer headaches and teeth grinding.

The only thing that could be improved was his sleep, he was still haunted at night with visions of the ripper’s kills, of a ravenstag using its razor-sharp horns to keep him walking deeper and deeper into a twisted forest. The smell of burnt meat was so strong it followed him long after he had woken up.

On his first day of vacation and Will spent a good portion of his time trying to get his pack to walk their usual trail but it was fruitless, even the snow couldn’t entice them to explore. He was definitely worried about them, their fear was the only thing that nagged at Will’s brain the only proof that things may be more sinister than they appeared.

Other than that he attempts to clean his house which had crossed the fine line between unkempt and outright hoarderish. It was then he came across Austin’s number, he had completely forgotten about the elf if he was honest and he wondered if it would be too late to call him. Having been near two weeks since their interaction, he wasn’t sure about the etiquette when it came to something like this.

Eventually a few shots in him he decides that it couldn’t hurt to make apologies.

“Hello?” The background noise told Will that Austin was at work.

“Hey it’s Will-“

“Oh hey! How are you?” Austin’s voice brightened as he interrupts Will.

“Ah, good, I sorta got wrapped up in work these last few weeks, I wasn’t purposely ignoring you,” Will explains.

“It’s okay! I get it so did you still..?” The implied question hung in the air for a moment before he replies hesitantly.

“If you still want to?”

The next few minutes were spent making plans to meet the next day, much sooner than Will wanted but he knew procrastinating wouldn’t get him anywhere. Because living half dissociated life that he has been would drive him crazy, according to Alana if he didn’t do anything to stop it.

'The sky was a dark grey, lightning flashing a violent shade of purple but the air was still as if it was in wait. Will breathed in the smell of ozone and the all too familiar burning meat, trying to calm his racing heart.

The Ravenstag was angry, its horns jabbing at Will’s back and no matter what direction Will walked the creature refused to stop its assault. Will could hear the constant stream of huffs and snorts as if the creature was telling him off.

Will shouted when the pain got to be too much. They said you couldn’t feel pain in your dreams but Will knew that was a lie, he felt every stab into his spine, the way his kidney was punctured, he was in agony.

Will fell to his knees unable to go any further, he feared the punishment from the stag but the creature simply went ahead of Will, tail flickering in agitation. Will buried his hands into the moist dirt below him but as he flexes his fingers he could feel his middle one sink into something gooey with a soft squish sound. He frowns and pulls his right hand up only to pale in horror at the gore clinging to his fingertip, he goes back to digging ignoring the stag which had come back to watch Will dig with it’s dark fathomless eyes. Will didn’t know how he knew, but the creature was amused now.

It took mere moments for him to inearth a face the sweet smell of decay combining with the ozone fragrance creating a scent he could only call ‘Creation’.

The face belonged to a male with freckles one green eye staring blankly and the other resembling a crushed grape.'

Will’s stomach sank and as he woke up drenched in his own sweat and he could his pack whimpering around him. The profiler laid back in his damp bed knowing he wouldn’t be able to get any more sleep but not knowing what else to do.

After a few hours of tossing and turning he faces his closet and pulls out the nicest outfit he had, a salmon shirt and black slacks. It was just lunch at a low-key place nothing fancy but Will found himself preening in the mirror trying to get his unruly curls under control. He had shaved his face but there was nothing he could do about the dark circles that hung heavy from his eyes.

He goes to the kitchen his bare feet padding lightly and goes to makes himself a cup of black coffee. If he was hoping to fortify himself somewhat before his date it was a moot point. Because as he brings the steaming cut to his chapped lips and takes a large gulp he instantly spits it out. It was too late however the taste of copper filled his mouth turning his stomach.

The queasiness only intensified when he saw his cup filled to the brim with crimson with one green eyeball bobbing up and down. The mug falls from his hands and crashes to the floor as Will bends over gagging.

What the fuck.

He closes his eyes trying to calm down his rolling stomach and even out his breath and when he feels ready he opens his eyes and sees that the blood disappeared. Only brown coffee stains the white tiles.

What the fuck? He couldn't help but think again as he stares unblinkingly at his floor. Will had in the past experienced hallucinations but usually, he was more sleep-deprived.
Now that coffee was thoroughly ruined for him he goes through the motions of taking his dogs out for a walk before sending the next few hours fretting about his date.

He thinks about calling Alana, who was more excited about this date than Will. The thought was too humiliating to consider for more than a few moments. Alana knew more than most about how inept he was but getting so anxious like a teen on their first date. Yeah no, he'd skip that. Instead, Will brought out his journal to write down what had happened that night and the weirdness that followed him to the morning.

Will arrives first at the restaurant a place better than the diner he frequented but not vastly so that he felt uncomfortable. He orders a glass of wine and shoots it back like it was some of his cheap whiskey. Will couldn't honestly say that the nerves were from excitement, it was more like the stomach-churning anxiety that was comparable to whenever he sees Jack's number across his phone.

The date went well, Austin arrived exactly on time dressed in pressed slacks and a button-down a shy smile crossing his face once Will made brief eye contact with the elf.

They ate and Will found himself listening avidly as Adam described his wish to bridge the gap between the Fae and Human's crime units. That was something Will had always supported, too many crimes were left unsolved because of the self-imposed segregation between the two forces.

Austin despite looking a bit younger than Will was actually nearing his three hundredth birthday. He was just budding into adulthood by his race's standards and a pureblood. Which made his current occupation and his future one odd. Purebloods of all races tend to be hardcore separatists, staying within their family businesses and advocating for less interaction with the human race.

Austin was talkative which Will was grateful for while his nerves died down, the seemingly innate awkwardness still stubbornly clung to him. There wasn't much he could think of talking about, part of his mind was stuck on the events that had happened that morning which led to his mind wondering about the mess he was bound to walk into when he returned back to work.

The Ripper's latest kill had happened only five days ago, Jack tried to get Will to postpone his vacation to no avail. The vacation would give him time to digest the scene and compose himself. Secretly Will believed it to be one of the Ripper's most beautiful creations yet, the thrum of power was something he could still feel in his veins.

It was near the end of the date when Austin insisted on walking Will to his car that he was stuck with a vivid vision of what his life was going to be like if he kept trying to be more like the general population. Austin (or whoever he landed with) and him seated by the fire sharing uninteresting stories about what happened that day, laughing at old jokes, maybe a kid, a normal sleep schedule.

No more intense cases, Will knew no partner could deal with his untasty reactions and thoughts, he would have to repress it, stick to teaching. PTA meetings. Home Owners Association. Mundane, predictable, easy.

The life that most people dreamed of so why did it feel like he swallowed a brick?

Will was shaken out of his thoughts when he felt the elf's hand clasp his shoulders. He glanced up and made eye contact with those starting green eyes filled with affection and knew what was about to happen but it still unnerved him to feel another's lips on his. They were warm and not overly wet but there was no spark, just a lazy sense of arousal that stems from a lack of interaction.

When they pull away from each other Will notes the faint blush on the taller man's face and he couldn't help but find it endearing.

Maybe he could deal with normal. It beats almost crashing his car on the way home from his date, sure that he saw a black buck with red eyes glaring from a line of trees.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so glad ya'll enjoyed the last chapter! I am sorry this was a day later than promised

End Notes

I wrote this story by hand over the course of two and a half months I was in rehab, and now that I have covid I have time to write it all down!

Please let me know what you think about it! If you don't know what to put (I too suck at reviewing) please just leave a heart or any emoji that describes your emotions from this chapter!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!